

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**JANUARY 24, 2000**

**3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II**

A meeting of the Historic Conservation Board was held this date at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with the following members present: Messrs. Bloomfield, Kreider, Raser and Senhauser and Mmes. Borys, Sullebarger and Wallace. Members absent: Mr. Dale and Ms. Spraul-Schmidt.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 10, 2000 meeting were approved as amended (Motion by Bloomfield, second by Borys).

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW - THE SEVEN HILLS SCHOOL DOHERTY CAMPUS ALTERATIONS, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff Member Daniel Young summarized the staff report for the proposed construction of a new classroom building; demolition of Doherty Hall, an existing structure comprised of three distinct building sections and listed as a contributing building to the East Walnut Hills Historic District, although not specifically identified or described in the designation report; and site development. Staff encouraged members of the Board to comment on the proposed new construction, demolition and site development.

#### **MR. KREIDER JOINED THE MEETING**

Mr. Richard S. Thomas of the architectural firm Steed-Hammond-Paul, project architect, presented the master plan for development of the site and detailed elevation drawings of Haile Hall, the proposed new classroom building, and accessory structures.

#### **MS. WALLACE JOINED THE MEETING**

Board discussion and questions directed to Mr. Thomas, the project architect, and Mr. Steve Black, President of the Board of Seven Hills School, followed.

The East Walnut Hills Assembly and the neighboring Seventh Presbyterian Church were contacted regarding the proposed development; public meetings with the neighbors have been held.

Proposed construction phasing is for construction of Haile Hall from April through December 2000 to be followed by demolition of Doherty Hall, development of 20 additional parking spaces and landscaping in June 2001. During the second development phase, interior modifications are proposed to the existing Administration Building to facilitate Code issues. A few of the current 53 on-campus parking spaces will be unavailable for use while Haile Hall is under construction. The

area currently occupied by the Doherty Building will replace green space/play area lost because of construction of the new Haile Hall.

Mr. Sehnauser suggested that the proposed dual-use, landscaped courtyard between Jones Hall and Haile Hall should be designed to give the appearance of a play area and pedestrian piazza rather than a traffic area with curbs and gutters. He expressed concerns that the new building would be large, with rough textures that are somewhat abrasive and aggressive in their nature. Mr. Thomas stated that clearance of the loggia connecting Jones Hall to Haile Hall will be 13' 6", enough to accommodate a school bus or fire truck.

Mr. Bloomfield raised the question of children walking across Johnstone Place to reach play areas and suggested narrowing the street or installing barriers to slow traffic, alerting motorists that they are approaching school property.

Ms. Borys and Mr. Senhauser questioned whether other uses for the existing Doherty Building, rather than demolition, and options for other parking had been investigated. Mr. Thomas said portions of the building are badly deteriorated and the cost to upgrade the building for school use was exorbitant; other uses or marketing the 14,600 to 14,800 sq. ft. bldg. have not been considered. He also said Doherty School has a cooperative arrangement with the Seventh Presbyterian Church regarding parking. The church would prefer not to deal with another owner about parking.

Responding to concerns raised by Mr. Sehnauser about diminishing the institutional character of the building relative to the neighborhood and adjacent domestic buildings, Mr. Thomas pointed out the massing of Haile Hall had been broken down into three smaller segments with a larger mass at the corner. Haile Hall will pick up on the architectural detail and character of the neighborhood without duplicating it. The clock tower and the loggia will be engaged at the base; there is no hard connection between the loggia and Jones Hall.

Ms. Borys' expressed concern that the expanse of glass filling one bay on Haile Hall's northern elevation seems inappropriate, making the small remainder of what suggests a brick wall seem an anomaly. She also stated that the hipped roof of the loggia suggests an object building that is freestanding.

In response to a question by Mr. Raser, Mr. Robert Horne, Director of Finance and Operations for the school, stated that the school has no plans to demolish the adjacent Fiske building facing Keys Crescent, currently rented residential property, to expand the school to the east.

Mr. Senhauser pointed out that the Doherty Building is a contributing building in a historic district and reminded the school representatives that the Historic Conservation Board requires more documentation verifying the economic infeasibility of reusing or selling the property, effectively denying the owner the use of the property, before approving an allowable loss of a contributing building within a historic district. The Board needs documentation such as cost estimates for

conversion to another use, etc. before making a finding in fact that this is an allowable loss.

Mr. Bloomfield said that the Board was obligated to ensure that the School had thoroughly studied and documented the infeasibility of retaining all or a portion of Doherty Hall for its institutional uses. He confirmed Staff's determination that the School would not have to document that it had attempted to market the building.

Ms. Borys suggested that the additions to the original structure might be demolished and the original structure retained and renovated; this way only a couple of the potential parking spaces and a small portion of the green space would be lost.

#### **BOARD ACTION**

No action was required by the Board.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Sullebarger reported she read in the *Cincinnati Business Courier* that Eagle Properties, a development subsidiary of Western-Southern Life Insurance Company, is acquiring property for development on West Sixth Street across from CVS. The Race Street Historic District is on the National Register but not locally designated. She pointed out that the Economic Development Department was responsible for the National Register listing for the purpose of stimulating rehabilitation in that area.

Mr. Forwood said that, in an earlier conversation with Mr. Udris, the former Director of Economic Development, Mr. Udris indicated that talks were underway about development of the corner lot that would likely result in the demolition of the buildings on that row. This amounts to about 25% of the contributing buildings in this National Register district.

The Board requested more information on the proposed West Sixth Development at the next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned (Motion by Raser, second by Borys).

---

William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

---

John C. Senhauser  
Chairman

DATE